Authority for environmental clearance

†496. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry has divided the projects and activities into two categories regarding their environmental clearance;

(b) whether any provision has been made to set up the Authorities for them at Central and State level;

(c) if so, whether authority has been set up at Central and State level for Rajasthan;

(d) if so, whether a copy of the Notification would be laid on the Table of the House; and

(e) if not, by when the same would be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) As per the provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment Notification S.O. No. 1533 dated 14th September, 2006 the Ministry of Environment and Forests is functioning as Central level Authority for appraisal and grant/rejection of environmental clearance for category 'A' projects as well as category 'B' projects for States which have not set up their authority. The State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) for the State of Rajasthan has not been constituted.

(d) A copy of the Notification has already been laid on the Table of the House.

(e) Complete proposal for constituting the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority from the State Government of Rajasthan has not been received. As per the provision of EIA Notification, 2006, the State Authority has to be constituted within 30 days of receipt of complete proposal.

New deals with America

†497. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have held discussions with America during the last two months to negotiate various new deals;

(b) if so, the details of the deals along with the time and level at which discussions were held; and

(c) the status of each such deal at present?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) India and the USA have agreed on the text of a bilateral 'Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy'.

(b) The Agreement is the result of five rounds of negotiations, which took place between June, 2006 and July, 2007.

(c) The outcome of the discussions is the final text that has been agreed to the mutual satisfaction of both Governments. It reflects the political understandings and commitments of 18 July, 2005 and 2 March, 2006 and the basic principles listed in the statement of Prime Minister in Parliament on August 17, 2006.

American warship in Indian Ocean

†498. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the purpose behind the arrival of America's warship in Indian Ocean near Chennai;

(b) whether the purpose was fulfilled;

(c) whether it was opposed;

(d) whether long time ago the Russian ship also came on Indian seashore;

(e) whether it was opposed at that time also; and

(f) whether there are threat of nuclear ill-effects from these ships?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) USS Nimitz, a nuclear powered aircraft carrier ship of the US Navy, accompanied by another US Navy ship USS Pinckney, made a port call at Chennai port for a crew rest and relaxation visit on July 2-5, 2007.

(c) Some sections of the society demonstrated their opposition to the visit of the USS Nimitz.

(d) Russian naval ships visited Indian ports in 2003 and 2005 for joint naval exercises.

(e) No, Sir. Such goodwill visits are routinely undertaken by navies of friendly countries and India to enhance mutual cooperation and friendship.

(f) No. The presence of nuclear powered ships *per se* does not pose a threat of nuclear ill-effects from the ship.

Construction of roadway to Mount Everest

†499. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.